ART CRITICISM AND FORMAL ANALYSIS OUTLINE ART CRITICISM

Defining Art Criticism

- Art criticism is responding to, interpreting meaning, and making critical judgments about specific works of art.
- Art critics help viewers perceive, interpret, and judge artworks.
- Critics tend to focus more on modern and contemporary art from cultures close to their own.
- Art historians tend to study works made in cultures that are more distant in time and space.
- When initially introduced to art criticism, many people associate negative connotations with the word "criticism."

A professional art critic may be-

- a newspaper reporter assigned to the art beat,
- a scholar writing for professional journals or texts, or
- an artist writing about other artists.

Journalistic criticism-

- Written for the general public, includes reviews of art exhibitions in galleries and museums.
- (Suggestions that journalistic criticism deals with art mainly to the extent that it is newsworthy.)

Scholarly art criticism-

- Written for a more specialized art audience and appears in art journals.
- Scholar-critics may be college and university professors or museum curators, often with particular knowledge about a style, period, medium, or artist.

Barrett's Principles of Interpretation

- 1. Artworks have "aboutness" and demand interpretation.
- 2. Interpretations are persuasive arguments.
- 3. Some interpretations are better than others.
- 4. Good interpretations of art tell more about the artwork than they tell about the critic.
- 5. Feelings are guides to interpretations.
- 6. There can be different, competing, and contradictory interpretations of the same artwork.

- 7. Interpretations are often based on a worldview.
- 8. Interpretations are not so much absolutely right, but more or less reasonable, convincing, enlightening, and informative.
- 9. Interpretations can be judged by coherence, correspondence, and inclusiveness.
- 10. An artwork is not necessarily about what the artist wanted it to be about.
- 11. A critic ought not to be the spokesperson for the artist.
- 12. Interpretations ought to present the work in its best rather than its weakest light.
- 13. The objects of interpretation are artworks, not artists.
- 14. All art is in part about the world in which it emerged.
- 15. All art is in part about other art.
- 16. No single interpretation is exhaustive of the meaning of an artwork.
- 17. The meanings of an artwork may be different from its significance to the viewer. Interpretation is ultimately a communal endeavor, and the community is ultimately self- corrective.
- 18. Good interpretations invite us to see for ourselves and to continue on our own.

Attributes of the ARTS and higher level thinking:

- Creative problem solving/Thinking outside the box
- Supports interpersonal relations/attitudes/emotions
- Questions/challenges/accepts/values
- Contributes/shares/volunteers/attempts
- Defends/judges/disputes/joins
- Appreciates identity/praises/supports

Describe it.

What kinds of things do you see in this painting? What else do you see?

What words would you use to describe this painting? What other words might we use?

How would you describe the lines in this picture? The shapes? The colors? What does this painting show?

Look at this painting for a moment. What observations 2an you make about it? --

How would you describe this painting to a person who could not see it?

How would you describe the people in this picture? Are they like you or different? How would you describe (the place depicted in) this painting?

Relate it.

What does this painting remind you of?

What things do you recognize in this painting? What things seem new to you?

How is this painting like the one we just saw? What are some important differences? What do these two paintings have in common?

How is this picture different from rea life? What interests you most about this work of art?

Analyze it.

Which objects seems closer to you? Further away? What can you tell me about the colors in this painting? What color is used the most in this painting?

What makes this painting look crowded?

What can you tell me about the person in this painting?

What can you tell me about how this person lived? How did you arrive at that idea? What do you think is the most important part of this picture?

How do you think the artist made this work?

What questions would you ask the artist about this work, if s/he were here?

Interpret it.

What title would you give to this painting? What made you decide on that title? What other titles could we give it?

What do you think is happening in this painting? What else could be happening? What sounds would this painting make (if it could)?

What do you think is going on in this picture? How did you arrive at that idea? What do you think this painting is about? How did you come up that idea? Pretend you are inside this painting. What does it feel like?

What do you think this (object) was used for? How did you arrive at that idea? Why do you suppose the artist made this painting? What makes you think that?

What do you think it would be like to live in this painting? What makes you think that?

Evaluate it.

What do you think is good about this painting? What is not so good?

Do you think the person who painted this do a good or bad job? What makes you think so?

Why do you think other people should see this work of art?

What do you think other people would say about this work? Why do you think that? What grade would you give the artist for this work? How did you arrive at that grade? What would you do with this work if you owned it?

What do you think is worth remembering about this painting?